

Ministère de la Justice Canada

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TITRE/TITLE: The use of investigative powers under the *Criminal Code* in relation to journalists

SOMMAIRE EXÉCUTIF/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A number of media reports have highlighted the use of investigative powers against journalists, primarily in Québec, and expressed concern that these powers have been used inappropriately.
- Police powers under the *Criminal Code* must be exercised in conformity with Supreme Court of Canada decisions that require consideration of the special role of the media in society, in a way that is reasonable in the particular circumstances.
- The federal and the Québec governments have expressed concern about these reports, and expressed an interest in reviewing existing practices. Québec has also made some administrative changes to its practices in this area to require greater oversight.

| Approbation/signature du ministre demandée pour le/Minister's signature/approval requested by: |
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Soumis au CM/Submitted to MO:

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Ministère de la Justice

PROTECTED B
FOR INFORMATION

2016-023178

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MINISTER

The use of investigative powers under the Criminal Code in relation to journalists

s.21(1)(a)

ISSUE

s.23

BACKGROUND

On October 31, 2016, *La Presse* reported that the Montreal City Police (Service de police de la Ville de Montréal) had obtained warrants to put the iPhone of *La Presse* reporter Patrick Lagacé under surveillance to see who he was interacting with over a period of several months, as well as to track his movements using the GPS in his phone. Mr. Lagacé was not himself believed to have engaged in wrongdoing; rather, police were seeking to investigate possible leaks of information to the media (**Annex 1**).

It appears that the warrants obtained were transmission data recorder warrants, tracking warrants and production orders. The requirements for obtaining the authority to use these investigative techniques under the *Criminal Code* do not include any special process for cases involving journalists, although the court can apply conditions that the judge or justice considers appropriate in issuing production orders and tracking warrants (Annex 2).

The information available about this case through media reports indicates that the activities in question were authorized by the court, pursuant to the processes for the relevant investigative powers provided for in the *Criminal Code*. Concerns have been expressed in a number of articles about the appropriateness of what occurred, and the potential for a chilling effect particularly on investigative reporting as a result of increased awareness that police may obtain such warrants and orders against reporters.

The news media reports that in recent years, police investigations have increasingly involved accessing information about the activities of the news media in Quebec (Annex 3). Both the Québec government and the federal government have responded by announcing their intentions to review existing practices, and Québec has also begun making changes to existing practices in this area (Annex 4).

News media reports suggest that former Private Member's Bill C-426 (BQ MP Serge Ménard, Marc-Aurèle-Fortin), originally introduced in April 2007, could be reintroduced as a response to this issue (Annex 5).

¹ It appears there may also have been a wiretap authorization designed to obtain text messages that was granted by the court but never implemented.

s.21(1)(a) s.23

CONSIDERATIONS

s.23

CONCLUSION

The value of being able to have journalists engage with confidential sources and the ability of people to speak in confidence with journalists, has been identified by the courts as having beneficial results for the good of all society that results from an effective fourth estate

ANNEXES [5]

Annex 1: Additional information relating to the surveillance of Mr. Lagacé - Summary

Annex 2: Additional information relating to the types of authorities obtained against Mr. Lagacé under the Criminal Code

Annex 3: Additional information from news reports relating to other similar cases

Annex 4: Federal and provincial responses

Annex 5: Summary of Private Member's Bill 426/ Protections for Journalist Sources

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> Page 3 of 3 Journalists and Searches

Annex 1: Additional information relating to the surveillance of Mr. Lagacé - Summary

On October 31, 2016, La Presse reported that the Montreal City Police had put the iPhone of their reporter Patrick Lagacé under surveillance to see who he was interacting with over a period of several months, and tracked his movements using the GPS in his phone.

It was reported that there were 24 warrants issued by the court since the start of 2016 to authorize these actions by the Special Investigations Unit (Enquêtes spéciales de la police) charged with internal investigations of police misconduct. Some of the warrants were obtained in January 2016, and renewed in March 2016. The tracking warrant was obtained in May 2016, and other warrants were renewed. On October 27, 2016, in the course of routine judicial procedures relating to obtaining information about the investigation, Mr. Lagacé became aware of the 24 warrants issued in relation to his cell phone.

The warrants and orders were requested in an investigation of allegations of fabrication of evidence by investigators specializing in street gangs and drug trafficking. Five police officers were arrested following this internal investigation and two were charged. One of the officers was Faycal Djelidi. Investigators became aware he was in contact with Patrick Lagacé, and news articles relating to Mr. Djelidi's files were published not long after these contacts were made, however none of the articles were written by Mr. Lagacé, and not all of them were in *La Presse*. There were leaks that compromised ongoing criminal investigations, and an investigation was opened in relation to Mr. Djelidi and the leaks; in the course of this investigation, Mr. Lagacé's cell phone came to be a target of investigation, although Mr. Lagacé was not himself believed to be engaged in criminal conduct. Mr. Djelidi was arrested in early July 2016 for criminal behaviour in relation to managing police sources and for soliciting the services of prostitutes, however there were no charges in relation to the leaks of information.

The fact that the news reports did not first appear in *La Presse* has led Mr. Lagacé to speculate in interviews that the police were using this investigation as a pretext to investigate him and his sources generally as he believes he has done numerous stories that have embarrassed the Montreal police. He believes these actions may also have been designed to intimidate police officers who may want to talk to a journalist.

The directors of the major newsrooms in Montreal signed an open letter on November 1, 2016, expressing their indignation and concern in the face of the surveillance of Mr. Lagacé, and calling for concrete actions to protect journalistic sources, including a more burdensome procedure for obtaining a warrant for surveillance of a journalist.

La Presse successfully argued for an order on November 4, 2016 from the Quebec Superior Court to seal the data collected by the Montreal police from Mr. Lagacé's cell phone, to ensure that the phone numbers of Mr. Lagacé's sources would be kept confidential and not used by police. The Montreal police and prosecutors did not object to this request. Police have advised

that, pursuant to this order, the information is on a USB key locked inside a vault and will be sealed and all copies destroyed. The media reports that further arguments about the evidence obtained from Mr. Lagacé's phone will be made on November 24, when it is expected the warrants will be unsealed. It was also reported that *La Presse* was taking legal action against the Montreal police, and that it is not known if the tracking continues as the warrants are sealed.

Annex 2: Additional information relating to the types of authorities obtained against Mr. Lagacé under the Criminal Code

Three of the warrants were transmission data warrants, which permit police to obtain transmission data, which includes numbers dialled and received by Mr. Lagacé, as well as related information, such as the date and time of the call.

Transmission data is defined in section 492.2 of the *Criminal Code* as data that: "(a) relates to the telecommunication functions of dialling, routing, addressing or signalling; (b) is transmitted to identify, activate or configure a device, including a computer program as defined in subsection 342.1(2), in order to establish or maintain access to a telecommunication service for the purpose of enabling a communication, or is generated during the creation, transmission or reception of a communication and identifies or purports to identify the type, direction, date, time, duration, size, origin, destination or termination of the communication; and (c) does not reveal the substance, meaning or purpose of the communication."

A tracking warrant was also obtained to permit the police to use the GPS in his phone to track his movements. Tracking data is defined in section 492.1 of the *Criminal Code* as: "data that relates to the location of a transaction, individual or thing."

Police also reportedly obtained 20 production orders, which were used to help identify the people who were in touch with Patrick Lagacé. Some reports also seem to indicate that an authorization under Part VI of the *Criminal Code* to intercept the private communications of Mr. Lagacé may have also been obtained, possibly with the goal of authorizing collection of his text messages, however it appears this authority may have been obtained and not used.

The provisions related to these warrants and orders were updated in the *Protecting Canadians* from Online Crime Act (former Bill C-13) which came into force in March 2015. However, the authority to track, to obtain information on numbers contacted by a telephone and the authority to have third parties produce relevant records are not new in the Criminal Code. One change made by Bill C-13 was to reflect the more intrusive capabilities of modern technology by imposing a dual threshold for the new tracking warrant that requires the higher standard of reasonable grounds to believe when tracking a thing usually worn or carried by a person, such as a cell phone.

The orders for transmission data recorder warrants, the more limited production orders, and the less invasive tracking warrants require a justice or a judge to be satisfied by information on oath that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has been or will be committed and that the tracking or transmission data or data produced under the production order will assist in the investigation of the offence. To issue the more invasive tracking warrants (as required to activate GPS tracking in a cell phone) and the general production order (that permits the court to order production of a document or data of any type in their possession or control), the justice or judge must be satisfied by information on oath that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offence has been or will be committed and that the information sought will afford evidence respecting the commission of the offence in the case of the production order, and that tracking will assist in the investigation of the offence, in the case of a tracking warrant.

These warrants can be issued by a justice or a judge. This is consistent with what is within the scope of the actions permitted for a justice in other areas of the *Criminal Code*. For example, a justice can also issue a search warrant under section 487 of the *Criminal Code* to search any domicile, which is a much broader and more invasive investigative power than an authority to obtain information about phone numbers dialled (which cannot include content) as is authorized under a transmission data recorder warrant, or about locations of a vehicle or a cell phone, which is authorized under a tracking warrant.

s.21(1)(a) s.23

A justice is defined in section 2 of the *Criminal Code* as "a justice of the peace or a provincial court judge".

The much more invasive investigative authority of a wiretap (authorization to intercept private communications) is however limited to judges. Under subsection 185(1) of the *Criminal Code*, an application for an authorization shall be made to a judge of a superior court of criminal jurisdiction or a judge as defined in section 552.

Annex 3: Additional information from news reports relating to other similar cases

- The Surêté du Québec (SQ) seized a laptop computer of a Journal de Montréal reporter, Michael Nguyen, at the courthouse in September 2016, several months after revealing a compromising video of a judge of the Quebec court. The judicial council, charged with disciplining judges, complained that the journalist had hacked into the website to get the document however La Presse demonstrated that the video was in fact easily accessible. The computer has not, as yet, been returned to the reporter.
- On November 2, 2016, the SQ said that it had tracked the cell phones of six journalists in 2013 in an attempt to identify a person alleged to have leaked information. At the time, Michel Arsenault, the head of the FTQ construction union, was under investigation by the SO and when wiretapped conversations involving Mr. Arsenault were leaked to the media, Mr. Arsenault wrote to Mr. Stéphane Bergeron, then Quebec's public security minister, to ask him to investigate the leaks, and wrote a letter of complaint to the SQ. Mr. Arsenault was also under scrutiny by the Quebec anti-corruption inquiry at the time (the Charbonneau Commission), and was involved in a legal battle with the commission over wiretaps of his phone, gathered by police in an investigation unrelated to the anticorruption inquiry. Mr. Bergeron has stated that he called the head of the SQ at the time, Mario Laprise, and asked him to look into it, although he did not ask for investigations of journalists. Concerns have been expressed in the media about the fact that the police investigation was launched on the same day Mr. Arsenault, the labour union leader, made a complaint. The SQ confirmed on November 3, 2016 that Radio-Canada journalist Alain Gravel, former host of the investigative program *Enquête*, had been the subject of monitoring of his cell phone logs for five years, from November 1, 2008 to October 1, 2013. Two other Radio-Canada journalists found out on November 2, 2016 that the SQ was tracking their cell phones. Marie-Maude Denis and Isabelle Richer, who are the current hosts of Enquête, have said that police were tracking incoming and outgoing calls in 2013. The SO has said that the investigation was closed and sealed in 2014, and has said that new people and protocols are in place at the SQ since that time, that currently any investigation involving a reporter requires senior management approval, and any application for a warrant would be signed by the director personally.
- On February 13, 2015, Justice Nadelle of the Ontario Court of Justice issued a production order requiring VICE Media and journalist Ben Makuch to produce certain documents and data relating to communications with or concerning Farah Shirdon, an alleged ISIS member, and then subsequently, there was a decision by Justice MacDonnell of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in R v Vice Media Canada Inc. and Ben Makuch, 2016 ONSC 1961 addressing a challenge to the validity of the production order (it was upheld). It is our understanding that Vice Media may be seeking to appeal this decision. The RCMP was not seeking the identity of confidential sources of the reporter but instead seeking copies of messages between the reporter and Farah Shirdon, whose identity was known.
- In 2014, the reporter Patrick Lagacé had a meeting with officers from the SQ who were investigating Ian Davidson, a Montreal police officer who it was alleged had tried to sell

a list of informant names to the mafia. The investigators tried to get Mr. Lagacé to reveal the identity of a source. After he refused, he was told not to reveal the fact of the meeting with the police officers, or he might be charged with a crime. He did not comply with this, *La Presse* published an article about his experience.

- In 2012, the reporter Éric Yvan Lemay with the Journal de Montréal had his house searched in front of his children, his wife was followed, and he was targeted by 12 surveillance actions by the SQ after his articles revealed a lack of protection for medical files in a hospital in Saint-Hyacinthe. This health news reporter filmed himself manipulating documents to show how easy it was for a visitor to access records. No charges were laid. The Superior Court of Quebec refused to award damages to Mr. Lemay for these searches.
- In August 2007, the Parliamentary reporters for La Presse, Joel-Denis Bellavance and Gilles Toupin, were followed for nine days by RCMP officers who were trying to discover how the journalists obtained a report from Canadian spies providing a summary of a conversation between Adil Charkaoui that suggested a plan to hijack a plane. Mr. Chakaoui denied that this conversation ever took place. After nine days of surveillance, the police wanted to seek a warrant, however the senior officer in charge, Bob Paulson, did not agree to pursue this warrant until the request by his officers was made again in 2008, however the idea was ultimately not pursued for reasons unknown.

Annex 4: Federal and provincial responses

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Québec Response

Québec has taken action to respond to these reports. Premier Philippe Couillard announced on November 1, 2016 that his government would immediately send directives to the province's three largest police forces aimed at making it more difficult to obtain a search warrant involving a journalist. He has indicated that in the future, police will need to get approval from the Quebec Public Prosecutor's Office before seeking a warrant involving a journalist, as is currently the case when such a warrant relates to a judge, a lawyer or a legislator.

Under

it, journalists are added to the special process that already existed in the context of wiretap authorizations for judges, lawyers and legislators. A new process has also been created for all other investigative authorities that requires approval from the Chief of Police and from a prosecutor and would apply where investigative authorities are sought in relation to journalists, lawyers, legislators and judges.

Premier Couillard also announced that the province will set up an expert panel headed by a judge that will include representatives of the police and media. The panel's recommendations to the National Assembly could include legislative changes. The Quebec government has indicated the panel will be given the power of a commission of inquiry, including the ability to call witnesses and hold public audiences.

On November 3, 2016, Parti Québécois MNA Stéphane Bergeron announced he would step down from his role as public security critic until an investigation into the SQ activities in relation to journalists is concluded as he was Quebec's public security minister in 2013, when the SQ was using investigative tools to track the cell phones of six journalists. He has admitted that he called Mr. Mario Laprise, then head of the SQ, to ask him to look into media leaks, although he did not ask Mr. Laprise to investigate journalists.

Federal Response

The Prime Minister has indicated publicly that the reports of surveillance of journalists are troubling and could point to a need for changes. He has also stated publicly that there are no journalists under surveillance by RCMP or CSIS, and indicated his support for the work of journalists and the importance of protection of their sources, and indicated an openness to discussion of these issues, while also noting that he did not wish to pre-empt full discussion by forecasting what might come of the discussion. The Prime Minister also indicated that the RCMP and CSIS have strong safeguards and protections to respect the freedom of the press, and that approval of senior officials for requests for surveillance in sensitive sectors such as journalists, academics and trade unionists is required, as well as judicial oversight.

Public Safety Canada Minister Ralph Goodale has stated publicly in interviews that he would also be open to discussion of the rules that govern how and when police can appropriately investigate members of the media. He indicated that while it was premature to speak to whether

legislative amendments were needed, he would be looking at the Public Safety Canada Ministerial Directive regarding investigations involving journalists and national security to ensure that is appropriate and sufficient in the circumstances, and to be satisfied that it is being complied with by the RCMP. Minister Goodale indicated he would not comment on the specific case of Mr. Lagacé, however he indicated he was profoundly concerned by this type of file. It was also noted in news reports that since 2003, a federal Ministerial Directive has required police to pay special attention to the status of the news media in investigations relating to national security.

Annex 5: Background on Former Private Member's Bill C-426, An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act (protection of journalistic sources and search warrants)

BACKGROUND

Former Private Members Bill C-426, *An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act* (protection of journalistic sources and search warrants), was introduced April 17, 2007 by BQ Member Serge Ménard. It died on the Order Paper on April 30, 2008 after being deemed reported back to the House without amendments.

Bill C-426 proposed reforms in the following areas:

- (1) Protect disclosure of journalistic sources and information that can identify journalistic sources;
- (2) Protect access to unpublished information in the possession of a journalist; and
- (3) Place restrictions on search warrants issued against the premises of a journalist or the media.

The sponsor of the Bill argued that the law, as it existed at the time, provided insufficient protection for journalistic practices, and he noted that many countries around the world had legislation aimed at ensuring such protection.

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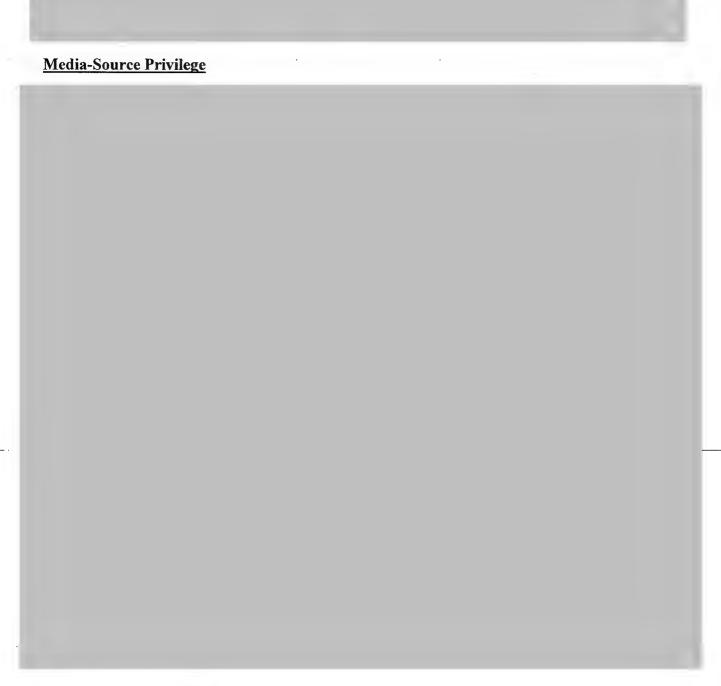
CONSIDERATIONS

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Common Law/Charter Considerations

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Date: Classification: CCM#: 2016-10-31 PROTECTED 2016-023178

Question Period Note

JOURNALISTS AND SEARCHES

ISSUE:

Criminal Code authority for police to obtain warrants to track cell-phone related data of a journalist, as part of a police investigation and as reported by La Presse (October 31st, 2016).

PROPOSED RESPONSE:

- The Criminal Code permits the issuance of warrants for tracking the geographical location of a person or object and for information about telephone numbers contacted by a cell phone ("transmission data"). It also permits the issuance of production orders for this information when it is already stored.
- "Location" information obtained by tracking the geographical location of a cell phone, and thus a person, involves a higher level of intrusiveness; this is recognized in the *Criminal Code* by imposing the higher threshold of reasonable grounds to <u>believe</u>. In contrast, tracking an object such as a vehicle imposes a lower threshold of reasonable grounds to <u>suspect</u>.
- Although there is no specific privilege for journalists, courts considering applications for warrants would be guided by the Supreme Court of Canada which has recognized that there is a public interest in the protection of their sources.
- It would not be appropriate for me to comment on specific cases or issues before the courts.

BACKGROUND:

On October 31, 2016, *La Presse* reported that the Montreal police investigation of a police officer involved obtaining information from a *La Presse* reporter's cell phone. From the media accounts, it appears that transmission data recorder warrants, tracking warrants and production orders were obtained under the *Criminal Code* in relation to a cell phone of a reporter with *La Presse*.

Generally, these orders can be obtained at the threshold of reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has been or will be committed. However, tracking warrants in relation to a cell phone impose the threshold of reasonable grounds to believe, in recognition of the higher level of intrusiveness of the tracking warrant for the cell phone. These authorities were updated and the higher threshold added in the reforms made in the *Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act* (former Bill C-13) which came into force in March 2015.

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2016-10-31 PROTÉGÉ 2016-023178

Note pour la période de questions

JOURNALISTES ET PERQUISITIONS

SUJET:

Le pouvoir de la police d'obtenir des mandats pour obtenir les métadonnées du téléphone cellulaire d'un journaliste, dans le cadre d'une enquête de la police, comme il a été signalé dans La Presse (31 octobre 2016).

RÉPONSE SUGGÉRÉE:

- Le Code criminel permet la délivrance de mandats pour la localisation du lieu où se trouve une personne ou un objet, et pour l'obtention de renseignements sur les numéros de téléphone composés ou reçus sur un téléphone cellulaire (« données de transmission »). Le Code criminel permet aussi au tribunal de rendre une ordonnance de communication de ces renseignements lorsque ceux-ci sont déjà entreposés.
- Les renseignements sur un « lieu », obtenus par la localisation du lieu où se trouve un cellulaire, et donc une personne, comporte un degré plus élevé d'intrusion, ce que reconnaît le *Code criminel* en prévoyant un seuil d'application plus exigeant, c'est-à-dire l'existence de motifs raisonnables de <u>croire</u>. Par contre, la localisation d'un objet, comme un véhicule, comporte un seuil d'application moindre, soit l'existence de motifs raisonnables de soupçonner.
- Il n'existe pas de privilège précis pour les journalistes; cependant, les tribunaux qui examinent des demandes de mandats seraient guidés par la Cour suprême du Canada qui a reconnu qu'il existe un intérêt public dans la protection des sources des journalistes.
- Il ne conviendrait pas que je fasse des commentaires sur des dossiers ou des questions qui sont devant les tribunaux.

CONTEXTE:

On October 31, 2016, La Presse reported that the Montreal police investigation of a police officer involved obtaining information from a La Presse reporter's cell phone. From the media accounts, it appears that transmission data recorder warrants, tracking warrants and production orders were obtained under the Criminal Code in relation to a cell phone of a reporter with La Presse.

Generally, these orders can be obtained at the threshold of reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has been or will be committed. However, tracking warrants in relation to a cell phone impose the threshold of reasonable grounds to believe, in recognition of the higher level of intrusiveness of the tracking warrant for the cell phone. These authorities were updated and the higher threshold added in the reforms made in the *Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act* (former Bill C-13) which came into force in March 2015.

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69(1)(e)

of the Access to Information Act de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information

Security Classification

Advice to the Minister

SENATE PUBLIC BILL S-231, AN ACT TO AMEND THE CANADA EVIDENCE ACT AND THE CRIMINAL CODE (PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTIC SOURCES)

TOPIC: Senate Public Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code (protection of journalistic sources) was introduced by Senator Claude Carignan (CPC, Québec) on November 22, 2016.

CONTEXT: Bill S-231 was tabled in the aftermath of recent events in Quebec involving investigative tools being issued in relation to journalists. On November 8, 2016, the Government of Quebec implemented new administrative measures and oversight in such cases and on November 16, 2016, it launched a commission of inquiry on the confidentiality of journalistic sources.

PROPOSED RESPONSE:

- Freedom of the press is an important right in Canada and plays a critical role in contributing to our democracy.
- Canadian law already provides various ways to protect freedom of the press and to ensure that journalist sources are protected, as required.
- The Supreme Court of Canada has also clearly stated in National Post (2010) that claims of journalist-source privilege are best resolved on a case-by-case basis.
- As previously noted by the Prime Minister, the reports of surveillance of journalists are troubling.
- While it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specific cases that have recently come to light, I can indicate that I am open to considering all suggestions on ways to ensure that press freedom is appropriately protected in Canada.
- In that regard, my officials are currently examining the proposed changes contained in Bill S-231 to assess their legal, technical and operational impacts.

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BACKGROUND:

Senate Public Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code (protection of journalistic sources), was introduced by Senator Claude Carignan (CPC, Québec) on November 22, 2016. The proposed amendments to the Canada Evidence Act would allow journalists to not disclose information that identifies a journalistic source except under certain circumstances. The amendments to the Criminal Code would change the rules governing how investigative procedures, such as search warrants, wiretap authorization and production orders can be used when journalists are involved.

The Bill was introduced in the aftermath of recent events in Quebec involving investigative tools being issued in relation to journalists, which prompted the Government of Quebec to implement new administrative measures and oversight in such cases. On November 16, 2016, the Government of Quebec further announced the creation of a commission of inquiry on the confidentiality of journalistic sources, which is due to report no later than March 1, 2018.

Canadian law recognizes that freedom of the press is fundamental to a free and democratic society and the freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication, is protected under section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The common law recognizes that journalistic sources, and any information that can be used to identify them, can be protected from disclosure, as privileged, on a case-by-case basis. Once a case-by-case privilege has been determined by the court (the onus rests with the person claiming the privilege), it prevents the privileged information from being disclosed in court.

The Supreme Court of Canada (*R. v. National Post*, 2010) has found that a privilege as well as freedom of the press are relevant to consider when issuing or authorizing the execution of a search warrant, and that even if there is no privilege, warrants against the media must take into account the media's special position in society and be reasonable in the totality of the circumstances. Currently *Criminal Code* search warrants and production orders may be issued by a justice when there are reasonable grounds to believe or suspect that an offence has been committed and that evidence may be found as a result. In contrast, wiretap authorizations may only be issued by superior court judges. In both instances, a sophisticated balancing test is always applied. The *Criminal Code* also allows someone subject to a production order to challenge it on the basis that producing the information sought would reveal potentially privileged information.

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Date: November 30, 2016 Date:

Page 1

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2016/11/24 9:57 AM

Subject:

Attachments:

Mark, Daniel, George and Laura:

Thank you,

Norm

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of the Access to Information Act de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information